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XI.—*On the Totanus haughtoni of Armstrong.*

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(Plate IV.)

NOVELTIES among the *Limicolæ* are so rarely met with now-a-days, that the acquisition of a new species is a matter of no little interest.

I have lately had an opportunity of examining two specimens of a Sandpiper (preserved in the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin) which were procured by Dr. Armstrong near Amherst in British Burmah in January 1877, and to which (when describing other specimens previously obtained by him in December 1875 near the mouth of the Rangoon river) he gave the name of *Totanus haughtoni* ('Stray Feathers,' vol. iv. p. 344, 1876).

Mr. Hume, who procured another specimen of this bird in the Calcutta market in December 1877, has described it under the name of *Pseudototanus haughtoni* ('Stray Feathers,' vol. vii. p. 488, 1878), and in his 'Game-Birds of India' has given a more detailed account of it, with a coloured plate, which, prepared without his supervision and unseen by him

till published, he has been obliged to condemn as inaccurate and misleading (*op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 403, 1880).

It will be unnecessary to repeat here the measurements and descriptions already published, as above stated; and I will therefore only offer a few critical remarks which have occurred to me upon the examination of the two specimens above referred to, which, so far as I am aware, are the only two to be found at present in any European collection.

At first glance this bird looks like a small specimen of the common Greenshank (*Totanus canescens*) in winter garb, the upper portions of the plumage being of a nearly uniform brownish grey, the rump and tail white, with very faint indications of having had bars across the tail-feathers when in summer plumage, and the underparts pure white.

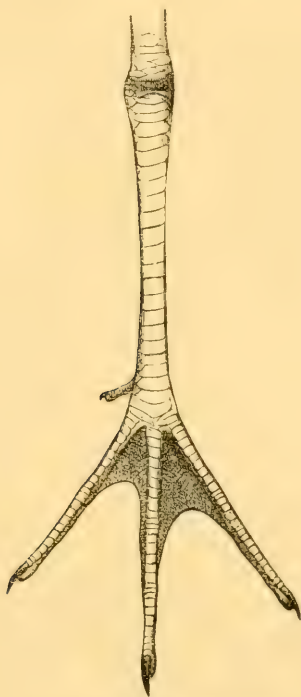
It differs, however, from, *Totanus canescens* in its smaller size, more robust bill with the lateral groove slightly more prolonged in proportion to the length of the bill, shorter and slightly more robust legs and feet, and in having a palmaria on both sides of the middle toe instead of on one side only as in *T. canescens*. The tail does not extend beyond the ends of the closed primaries; and the tertials are not so long in proportion to the length of the primaries. Besides I have never seen any specimen of *Totanus canescens* in winter plumage which had the back of such a uniform brownish grey; there is always a hoariness or mealiness (as expressed by the term *canescens*) in the dorsal plumage of our Greenshank.

It does not appear that there is much difference in the bills of the two species; but there is a noticeable difference in the semipalmation of the toes. This, however, I do not regard as sufficient to render *generic* distinction either necessary or desirable, although there is a precedent for adopting such a course in the case of the American *Totanus semipalmatus* (Gm.), for which the generic name *Symphemia* of Rafinesque was proposed on account of a similar peculiarity.

In an editorial note appended to the original description above cited, Mr. Hume wrote, "I do not, however, think generic separation necessary, and prefer to consider this an



aberrant species of *Totanus*.” In this I agree ; but he subsequently altered his views (‘Stray Feathers,’ vol. vi. p. 488), and placed the bird in a new genus, to which he gave the name *Pseudototanus*—an indefensible course, as it appears, since (if it is to be regarded as generically distinct from *Totanus*) it might have been placed in the genus *Symphemia*.



Foot of *Totanus haughtoni*.

As the only figure which has been published of this bird is admitted to be altogether an erroneous one, I have thought it desirable, while opportunity served, to have it accurately redrawn (see Plate IV.), and to figure at the same time the foot with extended toes, in order to show the chief distinguishing feature in this newly described species.